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ALL POSTS FOR PAO, USSOCOM FOR POLAD

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SUBJECT: WHA GUIDANCE, JULY 30, 2004

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
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Summary of Contents:

1. WHA Press Guidance, July 29 (Colombia)
2. WHA Press Guidance, July 30 (Venezuela)

End Summary.

1. WHA PRESS GUIDANCE, JULY 29, 2004:

-- COLOMBIA: PARAMILITARY LEADERS BEFORE COLOMBIAN CONGRESS --

Q: ANY REACTION TO THE ADDRESS BEFORE THE COLOMBIAN CONGRESS ON JULY 29 BY SALVATORE MANCUSO, RAMON ISAZA AND ERNESTO BAEZ, THE LEADERS OF THE UNITED SELF DEFENSE FORCES OF COLOMBIA?

A: THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS PERMITTED THE THREE PARAMILITARY LEADERS TO APPEAR IN PUBLIC. WE WOULD REFER YOU TO THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT ON WHY THEY WERE ALLOWED TO APPEAR.

NO ONE FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY ATTENDED THIS EVENT AT THE COLOMBIAN CONGRESS.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA IN ITS EFFORTS TOWARDS PEACE.

Q: ANY COMMENT ON THEIR REMARKS, AND IN PARTICULAR, MANCUSO'S PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH MORE "CONCENTRATION ZONES?"

A: WE HAVE SEEN MEDIA REPORTS CONCERNING THE REMARKS FROM THE UNITED SELF DEFENSE FORCES OF COLOMBIA, WHICH ATTEMPT TO RATIONALIZE THE VIOLENT, ILLEGAL, AND LOATHSOME ACTIVITIES OF THEIR GROUP. WE REFER YOU TO THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT TO REACT TO ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS.

Q: IS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SEEKING THE EXTRADITION OF THESE THREE UNITED SELF DEFENSE FORCES OF COLOMBIA LEADERS?

A: WE REFER YOU TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FOR INFORMATION ON EXTRADITION.

Q: WHAT IS THE U.S. POSITION TOWARDS THE PEACE PROCESS INVOLVING THE UNITED SELF DEFENSE FORCES OF COLOMBIA?

A: A CREDIBLE PEACE PROCESS CAN HELP END THE VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA AND ACHIEVE AN ENDURING PEACE. HOWEVER,

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WE WILL SEEK EXTRADITION OF COLOMBIANS WHO HAVE BEEN INDICTED
IN THE U.S.;

GROSS VIOLATORS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND MAJOR DRUG TRAFFICKERS
SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO JUDICIAL PROCESS AND PROSECUTED FOR
THEIR CRIMES IN COLOMBIA;

FORMER MILITANTS SHOULD BE RAPIDLY DISARMED, DEMOBILIZED AND
REINTEGRATED INTO COLOMBIAN SOCIETY; AND

THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA SHOULD CONTROL ANY ZONES IN WHICH
MEMBERS OF ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS ARE CONCENTRATED FOR THE
PURPOSES OF DEMOBILIZATION AND DISARMAMENT.

-- COLOMBIA: LETTER FROM U.S. SENATORS TO PRESIDENT URIBE --

ONLY IF ASKED:

Q: ANY COMMENT ON THE LETTER 23 U.S. SENATORS SENT TO
PRESIDENT URIBE REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA?

A: WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY CALLED FOR IMPROVED RESPECT FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA AND WE BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT
OF COLOMBIA HAS MADE PROGRESS ON THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS' RECOMMENDATIONS.

WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA
MUST CUT END COLLUSION BETWEEN ANY ELEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT,
INCLUDING THE ARMY, AND THE PARAMILITARY FORCES. SUBSTANTIAL
PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, BUT THERE IS STILL MORE TO BE DONE.

WE ALSO AGREE THAT IMPROVEMENT OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IS A
PRIORITY, WHICH IS WHY WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE EFFORTS BEING
MADE TO REFORM THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE, AND THE
MOVEMENT OF COLOMBIA TO AN OPEN, ADVERSARIAL TRIAL SYSTEM
STARTING IN JANUARY.

2. WHA PRESS GUIDANCE, JULY 30, 2004:

-- VENEZUELA: WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL, OPPOSITION CONCERNS
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Q: ANY REACTION TO THE EDITORIAL IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST
CRITICIZING VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT CHAVEZ FOR THE CRIMINAL
INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE ELECTORAL NGO "SUMATE"?

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A. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN VENEZUELA, INCLUDING THE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE NGO SUMATE (PRON. SU-MAH-TAY) .

AS THE AUGUST 15 RECALL REFERENDUM APPROACHES, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT VENEZUELAN CITIZENS BE ABLE TO EXERCISE THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FREE OF FEAR AND INTIMIDATION. THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT HAS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO THE FREE EXERCISE OF BASIC RIGHTS.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, LED BY THE OAS AND THE CARTER CENTER, SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE A CONSTITUTIONAL, DEMOCRATIC, PEACEFUL AND ELECTORAL SOLUTION THROUGH THE RECALL REFERENDUM PROCESS.

Q: ANY REACTION TO COMMENTS YESTERDAY BY SiMATE HEAD MARIA CORINA MACHADO EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT THE REFERENDUM COULD BE DELAYED DUE TO SLOW PREPARATION BY THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL?

A. THE VENEZUELAN NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL HAS ANNOUNCED AUGUST 15 AS THE DATE OF THE REFERENDUM AND WE ARE FOLLOWING ITS PREPARATIONS FOR THE REFERENDUM CLOSELY.
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